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Learning Together: A Study of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs in Early Care and Education: Year 3

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Learning Together:

A Study of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs in Early Care and Education: Year 3

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	7
Graduates in the Sample	8
Study Findings	13
Finding 1: Success in meeting educational goals	
Finding 2: Reflections on the practicum experience	
Finding 3: Working with linguistically diverse children	
Finding 4: Support for ongoing learning at places of employment	
Finding 5: Careers following degree completion	
Discussion and Recommendations	21
References	24
Appendices	26
Appendix 1 Study Design	
Appendix 2 Supplementary Tables Describing Individual Cohorts	



Executive Summary

The *Learning Together* longitudinal study focuses on four counties' efforts to expand bachelor's degree opportunities in early care and education (ECE) for adults currently working in the field. The "student cohort model"—in which small groups of ECE students with similar interests and characteristics pursue a bachelor's degree together, and receive targeted support services—emerged in Alameda, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, and San Francisco Counties, with programs at Antioch University, California State University-East Bay (CSU-East Bay), Mills College, San Francisco State University (SFSU), San Jose State University (SJSU), and the University of La Verne (ULV). With county, First 5,¹ and private foundation support, these six cohort efforts were developed with similar goals:

- To increase and retain a pool of B.A.-level professionals in the ECE field with culturally, linguistically, and professionally diverse backgrounds;
- To invest in institutional change at colleges and universities in order to expand their capacity to provide appropriate and accessible B.A. programs for ECE practitioners; and
- To assure that degree recipients are able to demonstrate and articulate professional competencies that are appropriate to the degree obtained.

In 2007, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment began implementing a five-year longitudinal study of each student cohort, as well as periodic examinations of institutional change at selected colleges and universities. In its first two years, the *Learning Together* study of B.A. completion cohort programs for working adults in ECE explored students' perspective on the supports and services that facilitated their higher education access and success and the impact of the educational experience on their professional

practice. Year 3 interviews provided students' perspectives about two issues of concern about higher education programs—the accessibility of practicum experiences for employed students and the adequacy of attention in the curriculum to working with children from linguistically diverse backgrounds. Year 3 interviews also asked graduates about support at their jobs for ongoing development as professionals and changes in position and/or compensation improvements upon completing their degree. Of the 103 graduates eligible to participate in the Year 3 interview, 92 did so, representing a response rate of 89 percent.

Graduates in the Sample

- Almost all the graduates (95 percent) were women. The majority (76 percent) were Latino/Hispanic or other women of color.
- The average age of the graduates was 44 years, with 57 percent between the ages of 30 and 49 years.
- About one-third of graduates (31 percent) identified their primary language spoken at home as being other than English, most often Spanish. The majority of graduates (55 percent) reported the ability to speak both English and Spanish with the children and families they serve.
- The majority of graduates (64 percent) reported being married or living with a partner and living with at least one child under the age of 19 years (53 percent). Eighteen percent reported living with at least one child under age five and 42 percent reporting living with an adult child, 19 years or older.
- Most graduates reported low to moderate household incomes. The income distribution of the graduates varied by the number of adults contributing to the household income and the number of children under the age of 19 years living at home.

¹ In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10, adding a 50-cent-per-pack cigarette tax to create First 5 California (also known as the California Children and Families Commission), which funds education, health care, child care, and other programs related to children from birth through age five. First 5 California distributes 80 percent of these funds to the state's 58 counties, all of which have created local First 5 Commissions to address local needs. The amount of funding provided to each county First 5 Commission is based upon the area's birth rate.

Study Findings

Finding 1: The vast majority of the linguistically and culturally diverse population of students participating in six B.A. completion cohort programs offering financial and academic supports succeeded in completing their degrees in the anticipated time frame, reported that their studies led to improved practice in their jobs, and were interested in continuing their formal education by obtaining an advanced degree.

The overall rate of student graduation in the cohorts was 81 percent, a rate more than double that of the typical transfer student from a two-year to four-year institution (Inside Higher Ed, 2010). In 2009, the average graduation rate after four years at California State University (CSU) was 65 percent among all CSU transfer students, compared to 79 percent for B.A. cohort students in our sample who attended a CSU² and who typically graduated in less than four years (California State University, 2010).

When asked if they had any educational goals beyond their B.A. degree, three-quarters of the graduates indicated interest in continuing their education, with most of these graduates expressing interest in pursuing a Master's degree.

Finding 2: While most graduates reported that their practicum experiences helped them do a better job at their workplace, they also identified areas for improvement, including greater opportunity for off-site practica, better supervision at the practicum site, and more dedicated time to reflect with practica faculty and supervisors about their placement.

Overall, 96 graduates participated in a practicum as part of the B.A. completion cohort program. For almost three-quarters of these graduates (71 percent), the practicum occurred in their classroom or workplace and for about one-third (35 percent), the practicum occurred outside their workplace. (Some students participated in more than one practicum.)

Almost three-quarters of the graduates who participated in a practicum outside their workplace agreed that their placement was a good fit for them and most preferred doing the practicum off-site. Most agreed, however, that participating in an off-site practicum led to additional scheduling conflicts with work and family, but not a loss in income.

About one-half of the graduates whose practicum took place in their own classroom and about two-thirds of the graduates whose practicum took place in their own workplace strongly or somewhat agreed, scheduling conflicts aside, that they would have preferred to do their practicum somewhere other than their own classroom or workplace.

The graduates' satisfaction with the guidance they received during the practicum varied by role of the person providing it. Almost all (94 percent) of the graduates who were supervised by a mentor/coach strongly agreed that the mentor/coach provided the guidance and supervision they needed and provided enough opportunities for reflection (87 percent). Fewer graduates, slightly more than half who were supervised by their instructor/faculty or by staff at the practicum site, strongly agreed that the faculty/instructor provided the needed guidance and supervision or provided enough opportunities for reflection.

Finding 3: Graduates, two-thirds of whom work in settings serving children who speak three or more languages, reported that their B.A. classes provided them with the skills and strategies necessary to communicate with children who speak a language other than their own. The percentage of graduates who reported difficulty communicating with the children because of language barriers increased by the number of language groups in their classrooms or programs.

Nearly all (95 percent) of graduates reported working with linguistically diverse populations with more than two-thirds (68 percent) reporting three or more languages spoken by the children in their classrooms and programs. Most of the graduates (81 percent) reported their B.A. classes had been helpful in providing them with the skills or strategies needed to communicate with children who speak a language other than their own, but satisfaction varied by institution of higher education, from about one-half (56 percent) to almost all (96 percent) across the six B.A. cohort programs.

While only a small percentage (16 percent) of graduates reported having difficulty communicating with the children because of language barriers, this percentage increased as the number of languages spoken by the children in the classroom rose. Only four percent of the graduates who served children

² Three of the B.A. cohorts we studied, including the two with the largest number of students, were offered at California State University campuses.

from two language groups reported communication problems compared to about one-quarter (26 percent) of graduates who served children from four or more language groups.

Finding 4: Graduates in center-based programs reported uneven opportunity and support for ongoing learning through their employment as evidenced by their varied access to professional development planning, formal and informal feedback, opportunity to consult mentors, coaches, and specialists, and participation in observation, reflection, and other professional activities.

The vast majority of graduates working in center-based programs (86 percent) reported participating in an in-service training in the last six months. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) reported jointly developing a professional development plan with their director/supervisor each year, which included such activities as conference, classes, workshops, and community meetings. However, only one-half of these graduates (49 percent) reported working regularly with either a mentor, coach, mental health consultant or curriculum specialist; less than one-half (42 percent) reported that they had the opportunity to formally observe in classrooms taught by other teachers in their center; and one-quarter reported having an opportunity to formally visit and observe classrooms

in centers other than their own. Approximately one-third (37 percent) reported that they were not satisfied with the amount of time they had on the job to reflect on their daily practice.

Finding 5: Shortly after earning their B.A. degree, about one-fifth of graduates reported job changes or promotions, slightly more than one-third reported pay increases, and none reported leaving the early care and education field. However, it is not yet possible to either determine if these developments can be attributed to their degree completion or to identify patterns in graduate career trajectories.

Eight percent of the graduates (n=7) reported that they had moved to a new worksite after they received their B.A. degree and almost one-fifth (17 percent) reported that they had a new job position, generally a promotion. More than one-third (37 percent) of the graduates reported receiving a raise after they earned their B.A. degree. For the graduates who received a raise, the raise averaged \$2.23 per hour, with one-half of the graduates receiving a raise of \$1.76 or less per hour. In Years 4 and 5 of the study, the research team will continue to analyze these trends in changes in job roles, such as promotions, and pay raises, including whether they were linked to educational attainment or routine cost of living increases.



Discussion and Recommendations

To inform policy making about program investment and development, we examined graduation rates. This is a commonly used outcome measure to assess higher education cost effectiveness, particularly in recent years because of the sizeable and growing gap between college attendance and completion, the rising costs of higher education and the growing demand for college educated workers (Johnson & Sengupta, 2009). Student retention rates documented in Year 2 of this study indicated that most students were likely to graduate and, indeed, in Year 3 we learned that more than four-fifths of the students participating in the study had successfully completed their programs. This exceeded the overall graduation rates of students entering the university as transfers from the community colleges, a path followed by our study participants. These graduation rates provide evidence that such programs can successfully increase and diversify the pool of B.A.-level professionals in the ECE field.

A growing body of evidence suggests that longer student teaching experiences, especially when coupled with concurrent theoretical coursework, are associated with teachers' increased ability to apply learning to practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009b). Yet, participation in a formal, supervised practicum or student teaching placement, although routine in K-12 teacher preparation, is often not required for ECE practitioners or even possible because it conflicts with work schedules.

Recognizing the importance of such learning experiences for ECE practitioners, each of B.A. cohort programs was urged by program funders to explore creative ways to overcome the challenges of arranging a practicum for those employed full-time. Many offered students the option of an on-site practicum. The study findings related to the students' practicum experience point to the importance of structuring field placements so that students are safe to try new things or make mistakes, risks that are less likely if the practicum is distinct from one's job and/or not considered in one's performance review. They also suggest that more resources are likely needed to train those providing guidance and to allow supervisors and students to spend more dedicated time reflect-

ing on the field experience. Although we do not have information about the backgrounds of those providing feedback to students during their practicum, there is increasing evidence that the quality of mentoring and practica experiences rests in large measure with the preparation and skills of field supervisors or mentors, the dosage of support they can offer, and the clarity of their roles (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009a).

In addition to providing an opportunity for practice, the content of higher education programs also influences student learning and effectiveness. Yet, too often, the discussion of effective teacher preparation in ECE has focused narrowly on the quantity of formal education, overlooking how the quality of the higher education experience contributes to the degree to which graduates are able to demonstrate and articulate professional competencies. One area of pressing concern is the extent to which higher education programs are addressing the needs of young children who are dual language learners, an ever increasing proportion of the population in California and other states.

Strikingly more than two-thirds of graduates (68 percent) reported three or more languages spoken by children in these settings, with the remainder typically dealing with at least two languages. Although most participants did not report difficulty communicating with the children because of language barriers, those who did typically worked with multiple language groups. This finding underscores the need for helping ECE practitioners build strategies for multiple configurations of linguistic background among children. The majority of the students reported their B.A. cohort program had provided them with information and support for addressing the needs of dual language learners, but there was considerable variation, with some programs rated as much more helpful than others. This suggests that college instructors themselves may be in need of professional development in order to ensure their programs adequately address the critical issues their students face on the job.

Too often it is assumed that once early childhood practitioners complete their degrees, they have no further need for professional development experiences, while K-12 teachers receive routine supports upon completing their education, which include induction, ongoing mentoring, paid preparation time, and paid staff development days (Whitebook et al., 2009b).

As demonstrated by our study findings, in early care and education, too often, mentoring or onsite training and formal education are posed as alternatives to one another, rather than seen as complementary ingredients for developing effective practitioners.

Degree completion notwithstanding, those working in the early care and education field often fail to receive better compensation for their investment in education and training. As a result, many skilled and dedicated practitioners seek higher-paying positions and often leave direct work with children and families or the field altogether. A recent study of the workforce in early childhood infrastructure organizations in California, such as resource and referral agencies, reported that half of the infrastructure organization staff had experience working directly with young children in center- or home-based early care and education settings. Most of these staff were college graduates, and many were women of color. The major reason they cited for leaving the classroom was the desire for better pay (Whitebook, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2010).

Shortly after graduation, a number of the study participants reported promotions and pay increases. It is too soon to identify any patterns, but we will

be tracking the extent to which this expanded pool of B.A.-level professionals remains in teaching and caregiving roles, moves to administrative or support functions, or leaves the field in subsequent years. To a large extent, the career trajectories of these graduates will depend on the financial reward that accompanies their educational accomplishments. Teachers and assistants who returned to school to meet the degree requirements for the New Jersey Abbott Preschool Program could expect a salary comparable to public school K-12 teachers (although not necessarily with the same benefits) in addition to financial and other supports for their education (Lobman, Ryan, & McLaughlin, 2005). Graduates in our sample, even those in Head Start, have no such guarantee. More than one-third of the graduates reported receiving a raise averaging about \$4,600 a year shortly after completing their B.A. degree. It remains to be seen, however, if these increases were directly related to degree completion or to other reasons such as a cost of living adjustment, whether the level of increase will be sufficient to stem the exodus from current workplaces or the field, and if increased reward awaits all the graduates.

This third phase of our multi-year investigation of B.A. completion cohort programs for working students has strengthened our previous findings about the potential of such programs to produce a diverse cadre of well-educated teachers and leaders in early care and education. As other states and communities consider large-scale approaches to effective preparation of ECE teachers, the six programs under study can serve as a model for the entire profession. As the study team continues to investigate the career trajectories and work environments of the participants and to tap institutional experience and change at these colleges and universities, we hope to offer a continually deeper and more nuanced understanding of the multiple ingredients of content and quality of formal education, support for ongoing learning, and financial reward that must be considered in designing policies to build an effective ECE workforce.

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Introduction

The *Learning Together* longitudinal study focuses on four counties' efforts to expand bachelor's degree opportunities in early care and education (ECE) for adults currently working in the field. The "student cohort model"—in which small groups of ECE students with similar interests and characteristics pursue a bachelor's degree together, and receive targeted support services—emerged in Alameda, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, and San Francisco Counties, with programs at Antioch University, California State University-East Bay (CSU-East Bay), Mills College, San Francisco State University (SFSU), San Jose State University (SJSU), and the University of La Verne (ULV). With county, First 5³, and private foundation support, these six cohort efforts were developed with similar goals:

- To increase and retain a pool of B.A.-level professionals in the ECE field with culturally, linguistically, and professionally diverse backgrounds;
- To invest in institutional change at colleges and universities in order to expand their capacity to provide appropriate and accessible B.A. programs for ECE practitioners; and
- To assure that degree recipients are able to demonstrate and articulate professional competencies that are appropriate to the degree obtained.

In 2007, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment began implementing a five-year longitudinal study of each student cohort, as well as periodic examinations of institutional change at selected colleges and universities. In its first two years, the *Learning Together* study of B.A. completion cohort programs for working adults in ECE explored students' perspectives on the supports and services

that facilitated their higher education access and success and the impact of the educational experience on their professional practice. In Year 3 of the study, which concluded at the end of July 2010, we conducted brief in-person and telephone interviews with students to secure their current contact and employment information, and longer in-person and telephone interviews with students who had graduated from their programs. This report documents the Year 3 study findings from the graduate interviews.

In our third round of contact with students, we continued investigating their perspectives on their B.A. completion program, focusing on their practicum experiences, and the extent to which their studies assisted them in working with linguistically diverse children. As we had in Year 1 of the study, we again asked graduates to offer advice to others considering pursuing a degree in similar programs and whether they would be interested in pursuing an advanced degree. This third year of the study also focused on students' employment. We explored students' perceptions of their workplaces as environments that supported their ongoing learning and ability to apply what they had learned through their studies. We also asked graduates whether they had changed job roles and/or places of employment since graduation and whether they had received any increased compensation since receiving their degree.

Of the 103 graduates eligible to participate in the Year 3 interview, 92 did so, representing a response rate of 89 percent. Appendix 1 provides a detailed description of the study methodology. Unless otherwise stated, the body of the report contains data for the graduates in the six cohorts combined; the supplemental tables in Appendix 2 contain data for the individual cohort programs.

³ In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10, adding a 50-cent-per-pack cigarette tax to create First 5 California (also known as the California Children and Families Commission), which funds education, health care, child care, and other programs related to children from birth through age five. First 5 California distributes 80 percent of these funds to the state's 58 counties, all of which have created local First 5 Commissions to address local needs. The amount of funding provided to each county First 5 Commission is based upon the area's birth rate.

Graduates in the Sample

Demographic Characteristics

Almost all the students (95 percent), and now graduates, who participated in the Year 3 study, were women. The majority (76 percent) were women of color. (See Figure 1). The average age of the graduates

was 44 years, with 57 percent between the ages of 30 and 49 years. (See Figure 2). This age distribution closely reflects California's overall ECE workforce, in which 52 percent of center-based teachers are 30 to 49 years old (Whitebook et al., 2006).

Figure 1. Ethnicity of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

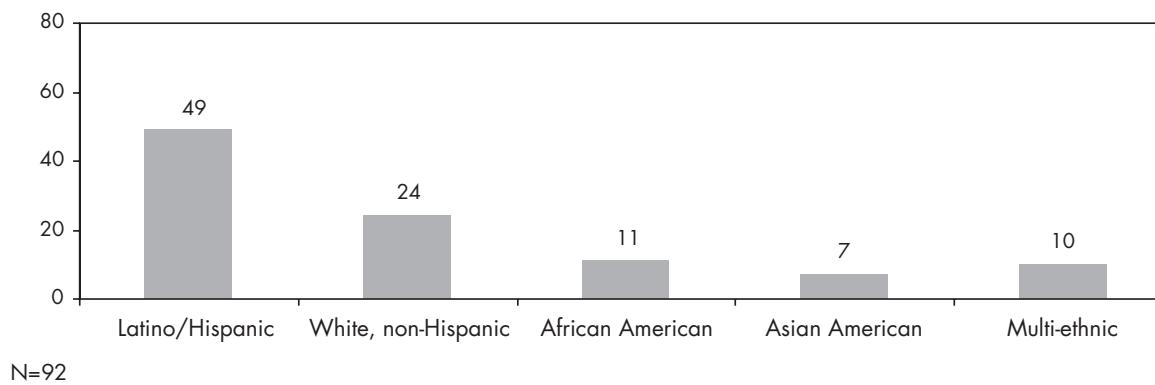
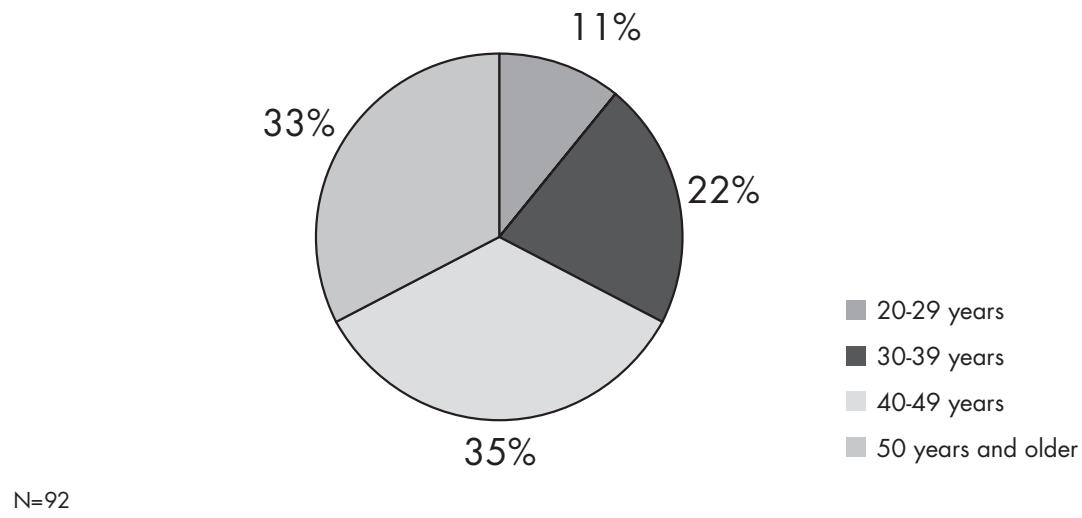


Figure 2. Age of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs



More than one-third of graduates identified their primary language spoken at home as being other than English, most often Spanish. (See Figure 3.) The majority of graduates (55 percent) reported the ability

to speak both English and Spanish with the children and families they serve. (See Figure 4). (The language backgrounds and abilities of the graduates varied by cohort, as shown in Table A2-2.)

Figure 3. Primary Language(s) Spoken at Home by Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

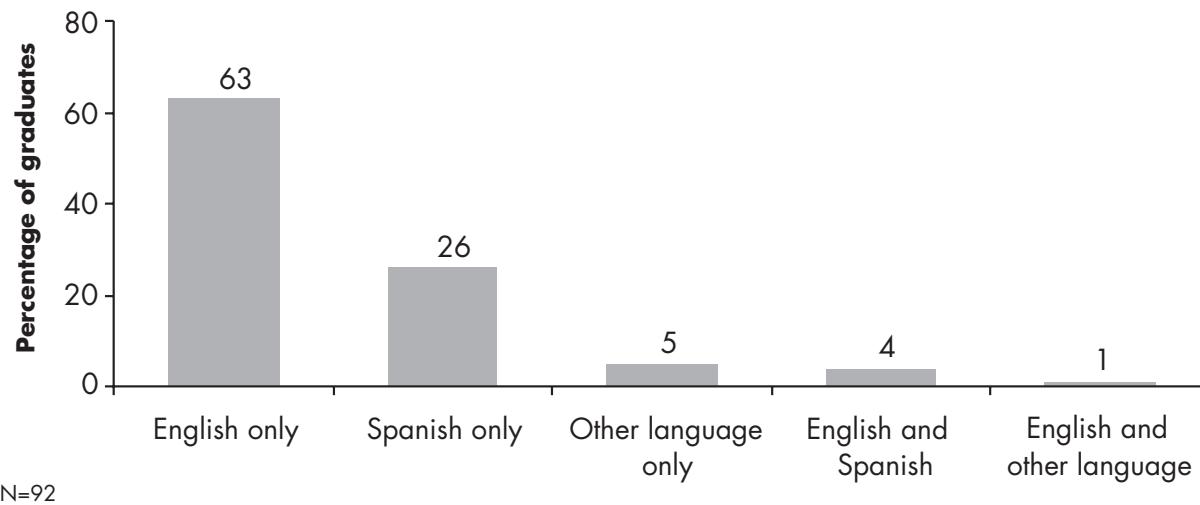
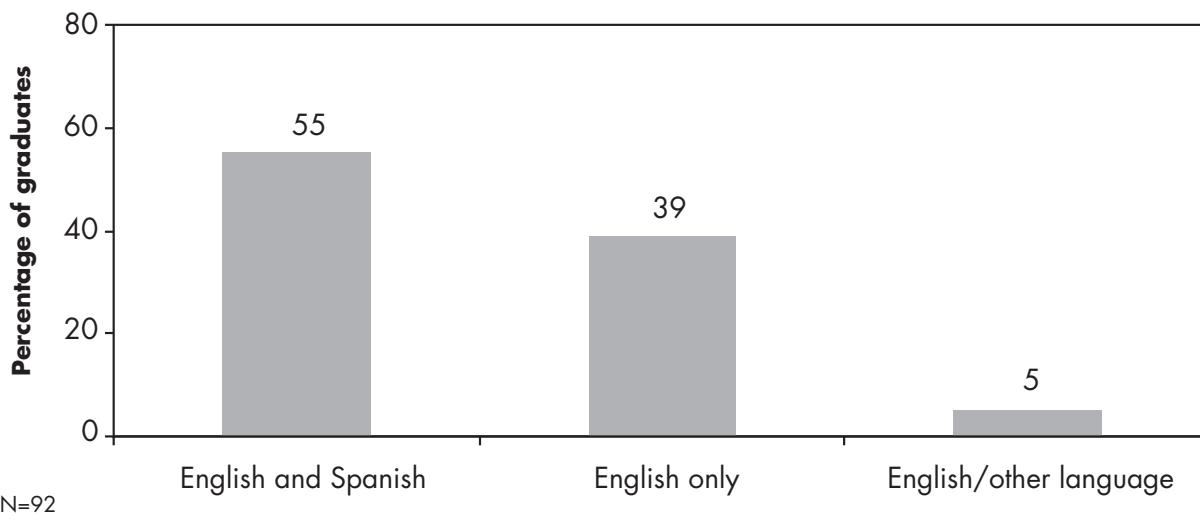


Figure 4. Language(s) Spoken Fluently with Children and Families by Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs



Household Status and Household Income

The majority of graduates (64 percent) reported being married or living with a partner and living with at least one child under the age of 19 years (53 percent). Eighteen percent reported living with at least one child under age five and 42 percent reporting living with an adult child, 19 years or older.

Most graduates reported low to moderate household incomes. As displayed in Table 1, the income distribution varied by the number of adults contributing to the household income and the number of children under the age of 19 years living at home.

Employment

The vast majority of graduates reported working in a child care center (82 percent); seven percent reported working in a family child care home, and 11 percent reported working in some other setting, such as a Head Start administrative office or a home visiting agency. Of the graduates working in center-based programs, one-half reported working in a classroom directly with young children: of these 42 percent categorized themselves as a teacher or lead

teacher; three percent as an assistant teacher; and five percent as a teacher who also serves as a site supervisor or center director. An additional 14 percent of the students identified themselves as head or master teachers. The rest of the graduates held an administrative position, such as a site supervisor, assistant director, or “other position” such as a family advocate or family services coordinator. (See Figure 5.) Of the students working in a center-based program, almost all (90 percent) worked 30 or more hours per week and almost two-thirds (67 percent) worked more than 10 months per year.

Tenure and Compensation

Graduates averaged eight years in their current places of employment and six years in their current position. Almost one-quarter (23 percent) had been in their current position for less than two years; 40 percent for two to five years; and 37 percent for more than five years. (See Figure 6.)

On average, the graduates working as teachers/head teachers/master teachers earned \$21.46 per hour or approximately \$44,600 per year.⁴ Twenty-three

Table 1. Household Income of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$85,000	More than \$85,000	Total	
All graduates	11%	26%	41%	22%	100%	N=81
One adult (graduate only) contributing to household income	28%	41%	28%	3%	100%	N=29
More than one adult contributing to household income	2%	17%	48%	33%	100%	N=52
No children under 19 years living at home	8%	28%	33%	31%	100%	N=36
One child under 19 years living at home	10%	25%	50%	15%	100%	N=20
Two or more children under 19 years living at home	17%	25%	42%	17%	101%	N=24

⁴ We do not report the wages for the assistant teachers because of the very small sample size.

Figure 5. Job Titles of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs
(Center based)

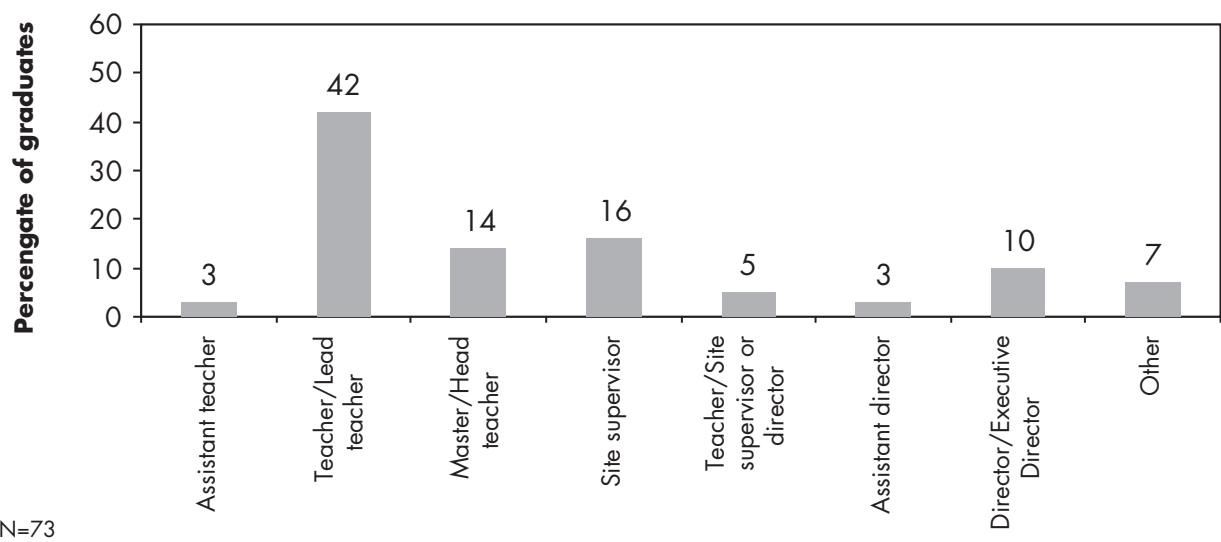
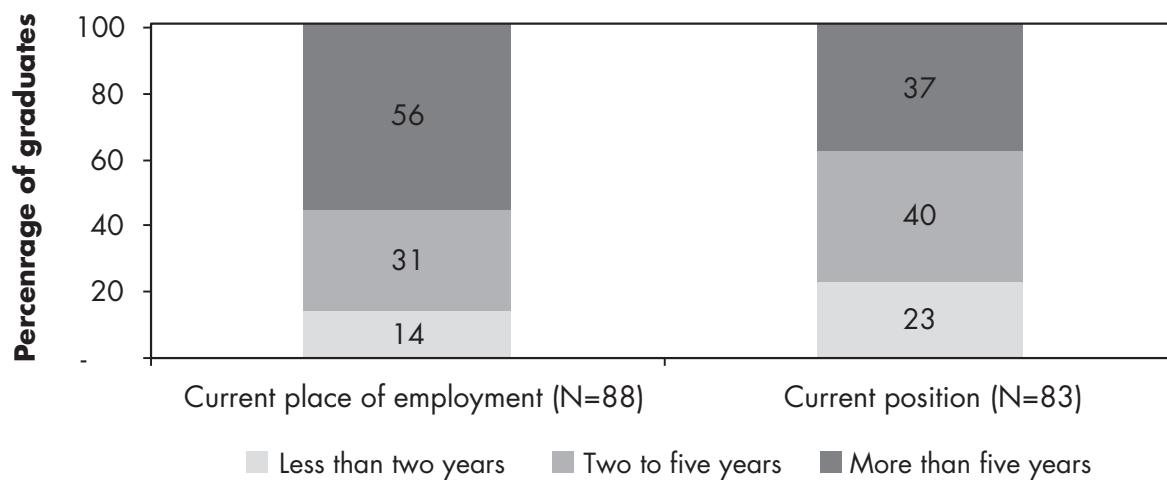


Figure 6. Tenure of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs



percent of these graduates earned \$17.00 or less per hour and one-half earned \$20.00 or less per hour. In a pattern reflecting Years 1 and 2 of this study, this is slightly higher than the salaries earned by highest-paid teachers with bachelor's degrees in their communities (Whitebook et al., 2006).

Graduates with administrative functions, including site supervisors, assistant directors, directors and teacher/directors earned, on average, \$22.11 per hour or approximately \$45,950 per year, slightly higher than the teachers. None of these graduates earned less than \$17.00 per hour and slightly less than one-third (31 percent) earned \$20.00 or less per hour. (See Table 2.)

Table 2. Compensation of Students of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

Compensation	Teachers, lead teachers, head teachers, master teachers	Site supervisors, assistant directors, directors, teacher/directors
Lowest hourly wage	\$14.78	\$17.83
Highest hourly wage	\$34.33	\$31.31
Average hourly wage	\$21.46	\$22.11
N	40	16
Highest average salary paid to teachers with a B.A.: Bay Area, adjusted* (Whitebook et al., 2006)	\$20.21	
Highest average salary paid to teachers with a B.A.: Santa Barbara County, adjusted* (Whitebook et al., 2006)	\$21.29	

*Adjustment adds a 2% increase for each year, 2005 through 2009.

Characteristics of children served

Graduates reported on the number of children served along with various characteristics of the children, including their ages and racial/ethnic groups. Teachers and family child care home providers reported the number of children in their classroom or family child care home; site supervisors and directors reported the number of children at their site. The 76 graduates who responded to this question reported serving a total of 8,090 children at one point in time.

While a higher percentage of students worked with preschoolers than infants, toddlers or school

age children, a majority of the graduates (64 percent) worked with mixed-aged groups. (See Table 3.)

For the first time, in Year 3, we asked the graduates to report on the ethnicity of the children in their classroom, family child care home, or their center if they served as site supervisors or directors. On average, 45 percent of the children the graduates cared for were Latino/Hispanic; 20 percent were White, non-Hispanic; nine percent were African American; 15 percent were Asian American or Pacific Islander; and 11 percent were multi-racial or some other ethnic group. The ethnic profile of the children served is similar to that of the graduates, as described in Figure 1.

Table 3. Ages of Children Served by Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

Serves at least one child less than 2 years	16%
Serves at least one child 2 years	30%
Serves at least one child 3 years	60%
Serves at least one child 4 years to kindergarten	77%
Serves at least one school-age child	19%
Serves a mixed age group	64%
Serves one age group only	36%
N=73	

Study Findings

Finding 1: *The vast majority of the linguistically and culturally diverse population of students participating in six B.A. completion cohort programs offering financial and academic supports succeeded in completing their degrees in the anticipated time frame, reported that their studies led to improved practice in their jobs, and were interested in continuing their formal education by obtaining an advanced degree.*

Graduation Rates

The B.A. cohort programs examined in this study were designed to support college access and degree completion among those working in early care and education from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. As documented in the Year 1 and Year 2 *Learning Together* reports, these cohort programs, combined with financial and academic supports, enabled students to persist in educational advancement while continuing their employment in early care and education. In Year 3, as indicated by graduation rates, we found that most students had been successful in meeting their educational goal of obtaining a B.A.-level degree.

As displayed in Table 4, the overall rate of student graduation in the cohorts was 81 percent, a rate more than double that of the typical transfer student from a two-year to four-year institution (Inside Higher Ed, 2010). Three of the B.A. cohorts we studied, including the two with the largest number of students, were offered at California State University campuses. In 2009, the average graduation rate after four years at CSU was 65 percent among all CSU transfer students, compared to 79 percent for the B.A. cohort students in our sample who attended a CSU, and who typically graduated in less than four years. (California State University, 2010).

Graduates' Reflections about their Education

We asked the graduates to identify three things in their studies that they believed had improved their practice in the classroom. Almost every graduate (99 percent) mentioned at least one topic. One-third mentioned a topic related to child development. About one-quarter of the students mentioned topics related to improving adult and peer relationships (25 percent); working with diverse cultures (23 percent); personal skills, such as communication and public speaking (23 percent); and working with families (22 percent). Nearly 20 percent of the graduates mentioned other topics, including teaching skills, research skills, and issues related to politics or the community, working with children with special needs or children who are English language learners, and curriculum/classroom environment.

We also asked the graduates to identify a class they wished had been part of their B.A. curriculum. More than three-quarters (79 percent) of the graduates mentioned an additional class, although no individual topic was mentioned by more than 15 percent of the graduates. Some of the topics mentioned included: classes on working with infants and toddlers; working with families; administering ECE programs; class room management; curriculum; improving writing skills; improving language skills for English language learners; working with special needs children; working with children from diverse cultures; and child assessment.

When asked if they had any educational goals beyond their B.A. degree, three-quarters of the graduates indicated interest in continuing their education. Most of these graduates (85 percent) were interested in pursuing a Master's degree.

Finally, we asked the graduates what advice they would give to a student thinking of joining their B.A. completion cohort program. The most common response (43 percent) was to simply encourage someone to participate in the program, saying it is a great

Table 4. Attrition and Graduation Rates for Students in Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

B.A. Completion Cohort Program	Original number of students in the cohort	Students who left the cohort before graduation, as of May 2010	Students who had graduated as of May 2010	Graduation rate as of May 2010	Students not yet graduated
CSU - East Bay	15	4	11	73%	0
Mills College	6	0	4	67%	2
San Francisco State University	34	2	30	88%	2
San Jose State University	35	9	25	71%	1
University	24	2	21	88%	1
University of La Verne	12	0	11	92%	1
TOTAL	126	17	102	81%	7

opportunity and that the program supports make it possible to succeed. Thirty percent would encourage someone to participate in the program, but would warn them to take the program seriously and work hard and 29 percent would encourage a student to take advantage of the cohort because of the emotional and academic support the cohort provides. About one-fifth (18 percent) talked about the importance of organizing your time to balance work, school, and family life.

Finding 2: While most graduates reported that their practicum experiences helped them do a better job at their workplace, they also identified area for improvement, including greater opportunity for off-site practica, better supervision at the practicum site, and more dedicated time to reflect with practica faculty and supervisors about their placement.

Research and professional wisdom in the field of teacher education increasingly emphasize the importance of field-based or clinical experience in teaching and related professions (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010). Teachers in most early care and education settings, unlike those in K-12, are seldom required to complete student teaching as a pre-requisite for employment (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009a). In part, this is due to the low expectations for education and training necessary to work effectively with young children; it also reflects the reality that most early care and education practitioners do not participate in pre-service preparation, but pursue education and training after they are employed in the field. Once on the job, however, participating in a field experience becomes logistically difficult if it involves changing their work schedule or foregoing pay to do so.

All the B.A. completion cohort programs examined in this study required the students to participate in at least one practicum or field placement at some time during their course of study. The practicum experience was designed to allow students to practice implementing new skills and apply the knowledge they gained in the course of their studies under the guidance and supervision of their instructors and experienced staff at their practicum site. Three of the five B.A. programs, Antioch University, CSU-East Bay, and SFSU allowed the students to do their practicum at their own workplace to accommodate their work schedules.⁵ Mills College and University of La Verne students, with a few exceptions, were placed in a practicum off-site from their workplace.

Overall, 96 graduates from the six cohorts had completed their practicum. Graduates were asked to agree or disagree with statements regarding the impact their practicum had on their practice at work. Two-thirds strongly agreed, that overall, the practicum helped them do a better job at their workplace, and one-half strongly agreed that their practicum helped them develop the knowledge and skills they learned in class and resulted in changes in their practices. (See Figure 7.)

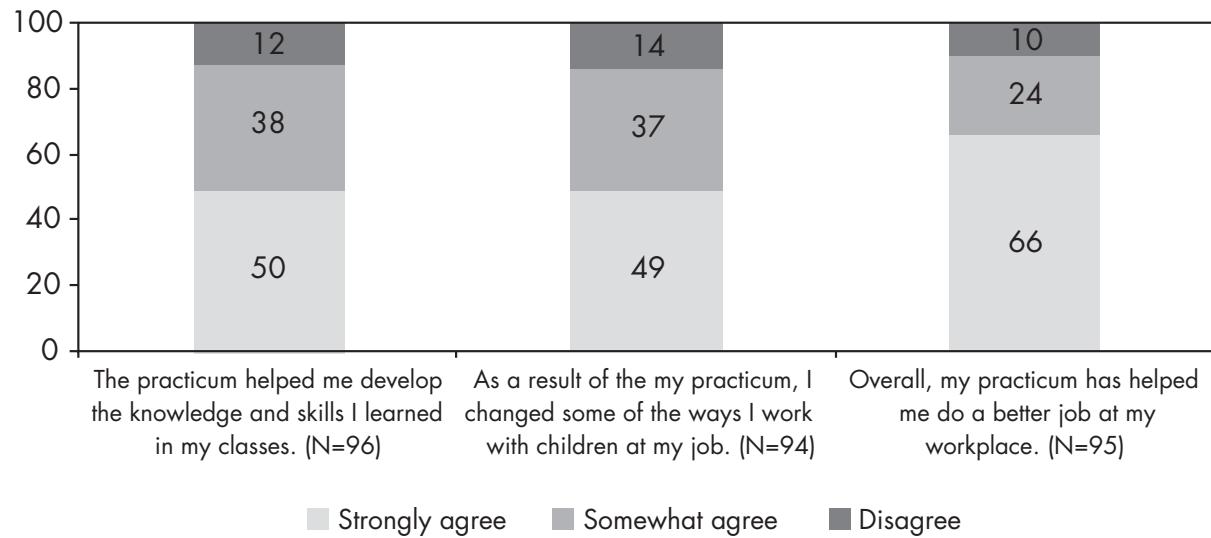
Practicum Settings

About two-thirds (65 percent) of the graduates in teaching roles reported a placement in their own classroom; 17 percent in another classroom at their workplace; and 30 percent at another workplace.⁶ (See Table 5.) Almost three-fourths (71 percent) of graduates who were employed as site supervisors, assistant directors and directors reported a placement in their own workplace and less than one-half (46 percent) reported a placement in another workplace.⁷ Because of this variation, we were able to explore the graduates' assessment of different ways to structure the practicum experience.

Overall, 86 percent of the graduates who participated in a practicum outside their workplace agreed that their placement was a good fit for them and 79 percent preferred doing the practicum outside their workplace. Most agreed, however, that participating in a practicum outside their workplace led to additional scheduling conflicts with work and family but not to a loss in income. (See Figure 8.)

About one-half (51 percent) of the graduates whose practicum took place in their own classroom strongly or somewhat agreed, scheduling conflicts

Figure 7. Practicum Experience of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs: Impact on Practice at Work



⁵ The practicum was referred to as a field placement at the University of La Verne and Mills College and as an internship at SJSU and SFSU. Because of differences in program timing and length, information about the practica were collected over two years. During Year 2, we asked all the interviewees about their practicum experience. If they had not completed their practicum during Year 2, we asked them again during the Year 3 interviews.

⁶ This adds up to more than 100 percent because some students had multiple placements.

⁷ This adds up to more than 100 percent because some students had multiple placements.

Table 5. Location of Practicum of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

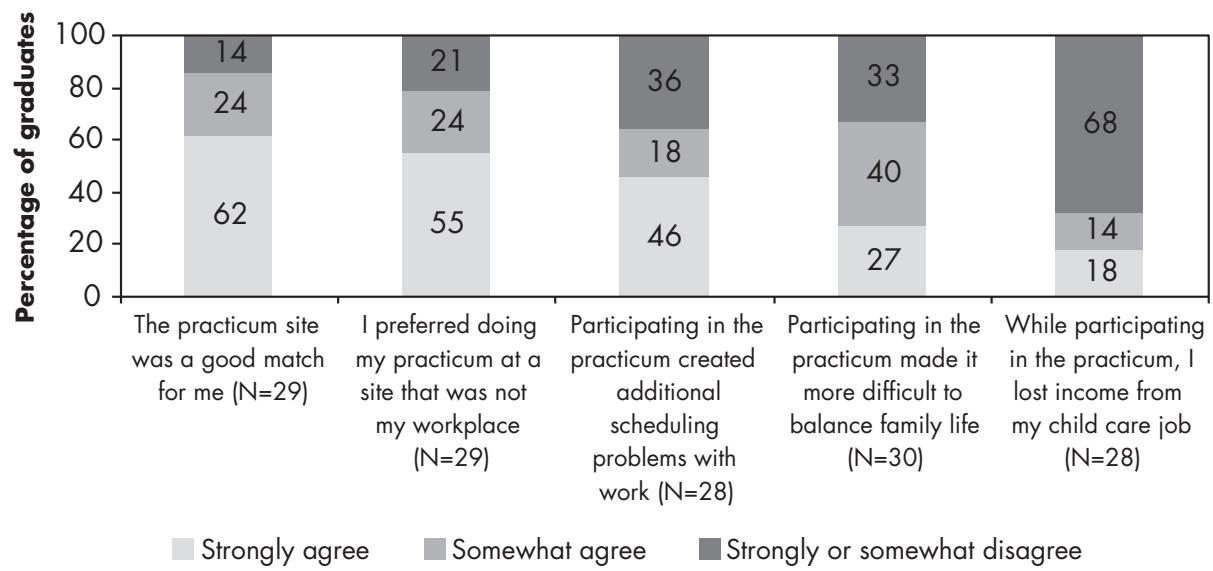
Location of practicum

Teacher: completed practicum in own classroom	65%
Teacher: completed practicum in other classroom, same workplace	17%
Teacher: completed practicum at other work place	30%
Totals might exceed 100% because some students had more than one practicum placement.	
N=71	
Director/site supervisor: completed practicum at own workplace	71%
Director/site supervisor: completed practicum at other workplace	46%
Totals might exceed 100% because some students had more than one practicum placement.	
N=24	

Supervision and guidance

Provided by faculty from B.A. program	92%
Provided by staff at practicum site	72%
Provided by mentor/coach	17%
Totals might exceed 100% because some students had more than one practicum placement.	
N=96	

Figure 8. Practicum Experience of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs: Practicum Off-site from Workplace



aside, that they would have preferred to do their practicum somewhere other than their own classroom. For those teachers placed in their own workplace, but not in their own classroom and for the directors/site supervisors placed in their own workplaces, two-thirds (65 percent) agreed that they would have preferred a placement outside their workplace. (See Figure 9.)

Most graduates reported that more than one person provided guidance during their practicum experience. Almost all the graduates (92 percent) reported that an instructor from the cohort program provided the guidance; 72 percent reported a staff person from the practicum site; and 17 percent reported a mentor or coach. (See Table 6.)

The availability of a mentor or coach varied among the cohorts. As the mentor/coach is built into the practicum program at CSU-East Bay, all the CSU-East Bay graduates reported a mentor/coach, compared to 17 percent of the University of La Verne, seven percent of the SFSU, five percent of the San Jose State University, and none of the Antioch University or Mills College graduates.

Satisfaction with the guidance received during the practicum varied by role of the person providing it. Almost all (94 percent) of the graduates who were supervised by a mentor/coach strongly agreed that the mentor/coach provided the guidance and supervision they needed. Fewer graduates who were supervised by their instructor/faculty (59 percent) or by staff at

Figure 9. Practicum Experience of Graduates of Six B.A. Cohort Completion Programs: Practicum Site in own Classroom or Workplace



Table 6. Practicum Supervision and Guidance of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

Supervision and guidance

Provided by faculty from B.A. program	92%
Provided by staff at practicum site	72%
Provided by mentor/coach	17%

N=96

the practicum site (52 percent) strongly agreed that the faculty/instructor provided the needed guidance and supervision. (See Figure 10.)

For those graduates supervised by a mentor coach, 87 percent strongly agreed that they had enough

opportunities to reflect on the practicum experience with this supervisor, compared to 55 percent of the graduates supervised by their faculty/instructor and 60 percent supervised by staff at the practicum site. (See Figure 11.)

Figure 10: Practicum Experience of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs: Guidance

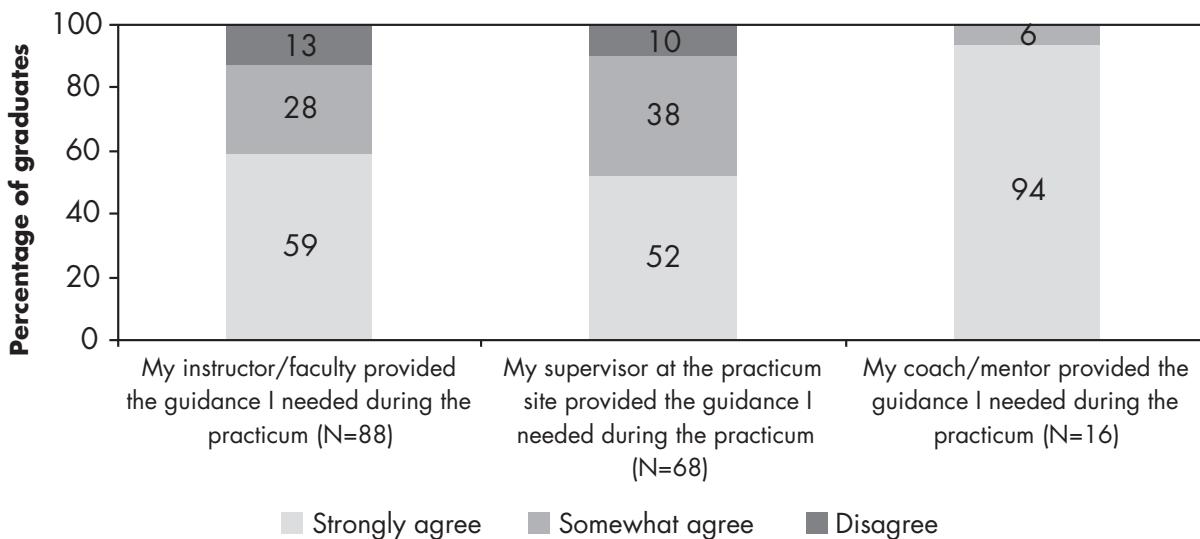
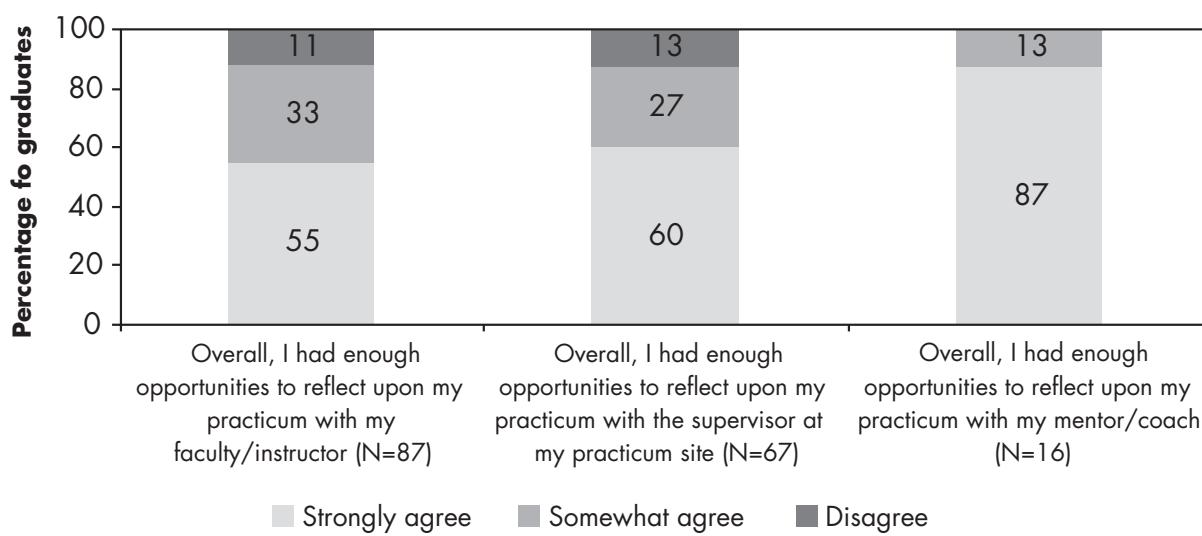


Figure 11. Practicum Experience of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs: Reflection



Finding 3: *Graduates, two-thirds of whom work in settings serving children who speak three or more languages, reported that their B.A. classes provided them with the skills and strategies necessary to communicate with children who speak a language other than their own. The percentage of graduates who reported difficulty communicating with the children because of language barriers increased by the number of language groups in their classrooms or programs.*

Approximately half of the young children in California speak a language other than English at home, yet more than three-quarters of the workforce employed in licensed centers and homes has not participated in training or formal education focused on the developmental and instructional issues related to dual language learning in young children (Whitebook et al., 2006). Additionally, there is concern about the limited attention given to this issue in higher education programs for early care and education practitioners (Ray, Bowman, & Robbins, 2006; Whitebook, Bellm, Lee, & Sakai, 2005). This study sought to learn if the graduates perceived their B.A. program to be helpful in supporting their work with children who were English language learners and to identify difficulties graduates experienced on the job related to working with children speaking multiples languages.

Nearly all (95 percent) of graduates reported working with linguistically diverse populations. Almost one-third (27 percent) of the graduates reported that two languages were spoken, while more than two-thirds (68 percent) reported three or more languages spoken by the children in their classrooms or programs. Most of the graduates (81 percent) reported that their B.A. classes had been helpful in providing them with the skills or strategies needed to communicate with children who speak a language other than their own, but satisfaction varied by institution of higher education, from about one-half (56 percent) to almost all (96 percent) across the six B.A. cohort programs.

While only a small percentage (16 percent) of graduates reported they had difficulty communicating with the children because of language barriers, this percentage increased as the number of languages spoken by the children in the classroom rose. Only four percent of the graduates who served children from two language groups reported communications problems compared

to 11 percent of graduates who served children from three language groups and about one-quarter (26 percent) of graduates who served children from four or more language groups.

Finding 4: *Graduates in center-based programs reported uneven opportunity and support for ongoing learning through their employment as evidenced by their varied access to professional development planning, formal and informal feedback, opportunity to consult mentors, coaches, and specialists, and participation in observation, reflection, and other professional activities.*

Teachers and other professionals develop over time, and thus support for on-the-job learning is essential to improving and refining their instructional and caregiving practices (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009b; Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005). Graduates were asked about opportunities at their place of employment that promote their continued professional growth and development.

Intentional Professional Development Planning, Support, and Feedback

Nearly two-thirds of graduates (64 percent) reported jointly developing a professional development plan with their director/supervisor each year, which included such activities as conferences, classes, workshops, and community meetings. Of these students, about half (55 percent) reported receiving encouragement and financial assistance, or paid or flex time to follow through with their professional development plan. Approximately one-quarter (27 percent) received financial support or time only (time off or flex time) and 18 percent received encouragement only to follow through with their professional development plan.

Graduates who worked in classrooms were asked about the informal and formal feedback they received about their teaching practices from their director or supervisor. Almost all (95 percent) reported that they participated in formal evaluations, with 65 percent reporting receiving this feedback once per year and 35 percent more often than once a year. Receiving informal feedback from their director or supervisor was more variable. Ten percent of graduates reported

receiving informal feedback daily, 12 percent weekly, 24 percent at least once every two weeks, 37 percent once per month, 10 percent less than once a month and seven percent received feedback only as needed.

Access to Other Professionals

One-half (51 percent) of graduates reported that they did not regularly work with a coach, mentor, mental health consultant, or curriculum specialist. Slightly less than one-third of graduates (29 percent) reported that they work regularly with a mental health consultant. Eighteen percent of graduates worked regularly with a curriculum specialist, 19 percent work with a mentor, and eight percent with a coach. However, three-quarters of graduates (76 percent) reported working as a formal or informal mentor or coach for another early childhood teacher, and more than one-third (39 percent) reported teaching a professional development class for staff at their center. A quarter of graduates (25 percent) reported teaching a professional development class for early childhood educators in their community.

Training and Opportunity for Observation and Reflection

The vast majority of graduates (86 percent) reported participating in an in-service training in the last six months. However, less than half of graduates (42 percent) who worked in center-based classrooms reported that they had the opportunity to formally observe in classrooms taught by other teachers in their center, and only a quarter of graduates (24 percent) who worked in center-based classroom reported having an opportunity to formally visit and observe classrooms in centers other than their own. Approximately one-third (37 percent) reported that they were not satisfied with the amount of time they had on the job to reflect on their every day practice.

Finding 5: *Shortly after earning their B.A. degree, about one-fifth of graduates reported job changes or promotions, slightly more than one-third reported pay increases, and none reported leaving the early care and education field. However, it is not yet possible to either determine if these developments can be attributed to their degree completion or to identify patterns in graduate career trajectories.*

One important goal of this evaluation is to better understand the career trajectory of the ECE practitioners who attain B.A. degrees. At the most basic level, stakeholders want to know whether those who succeed in obtaining degrees are remaining in the field of early childhood and receiving adequate financial reward for their educational achievements. Because of their investment of time, effort and resources in their education, it is important to explore whether graduates received increased wages or received a better benefits package upon graduation. This is particularly important in light of the documented movement of those with B.A. degrees and experience with young children from classrooms or homes working directly with young children in search of better compensation (Whitebook, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2010).

Career Trajectories

We asked the graduates if, after receiving their degree, they moved to a new workplace or changed their job title/position. Eight percent of the graduates (n=7) reported that they had moved to a new workplace after they received their B.A. degree. Shortly after graduation, almost one-fifth (17 percent) reported that they had a new job position. These new job positions were generally promotions, including moving from: an assistant teacher or floater to a teacher; a teacher to a lead or head teacher; a teacher to a site supervisor; or, a teacher to some other position, such as a family advocate or program coordinator. Of the 14 students who changed their job position, four moved out of the classroom: two moved from teacher to site supervisor and two moved from teacher to some other position.

Impact of a B.A. Degree on the Graduates' Compensation and Benefits

More than one-third (37 percent) of the graduates reported receiving a raise after they earned their B.A. degree. For the graduates who received a raise, the raise averaged \$2.23 per hour, with one-half of the graduates receiving a raise of \$1.76 or less per hour. For graduates working full time and year round, the average increase would be \$4,638 per year. In Years 4 and 5 of the study, the research team will continue to analyze these trends in changes in job roles, such as promotions, and pay raises, including whether they were linked to educational attainment or routine cost of living increases.

Discussion and Recommendations

The B.A. cohort programs examined in this study were designed to support college access and degree completion among those working in early care and education, many of whom are women of color, among the first generation in their families to pursue higher education, and who speak English as a second language. Such efforts are also intended to build a pipeline to prepare ethnically and linguistically diverse leaders for the early care and education field (Whitebook, Kipnis, & Bellm, 2007; Calderon, 2005; Dukakis & Bellm, 2006).

In its first two years, the Learning Together study of B.A. completion cohort programs for working adults in ECE explored students' perspectives on the supports and services that facilitated their higher education access and success, as well as the impact of the educational experience on their professional practice. In Year 3 of the study, which drew to a close in summer 2010, the vast majority of students had graduated, providing resounding evidence that these programs had successfully increased and diversified the pool of B.A.-level professionals in the ECE field. Year 3 interviews provided students' perspectives about two issues of concern about higher education programs—the accessibility of practicum experiences for employed students and the adequacy of attention in the curriculum to working with children from linguistically diverse backgrounds. Year 3 interviews also asked graduates about support at their jobs for ongoing development as professionals and changes in position and/or compensation improvements upon completing their degree.

Increasing and Diversifying B.A.-level professionals in the ECE field

Demand for bachelor's degree programs for adults working in early care and education programs has been prompted by new requirements for B.A.-level teachers in Head Start programs and, in a growing number of states and California counties, publicly funded preschool programs (Improving Head Start

for School Readiness Act, 2007). These changes have occurred alongside concerns about maintaining the diversity of the early childhood workforce, which more closely resembles the children in California and other states with respect to ethnicity and language than do teachers in grades K-12 (Fowler, Bloom, Talan, Beneke, & Kelton, 2008; Whitebook et al., 2009a and 2009b; Dukakis & Bellm, 2006; Calderon, 2005). B.A. completion cohort programs for ECE professionals have emerged in many communities and states to ensure that higher qualifications do not result in displacing experienced and dedicated members of the ECE workforce, or decreasing diversity (Chu, Martinez-Griego, & Cronin, 2010).

To inform policy making about program investment and development we examined graduation rates. This is a commonly used outcome measure to assess higher education cost effectiveness, particularly in recent years because of the sizeable and growing gap between college attendance and completion, the rising costs of higher education, and the growing demand for college educated workers (Johnson & Sengupta, 2009). Student retention rates documented in Year 2 of this study indicated that most students were likely to graduate and, indeed, in Year 3 we learned that more than four-fifths of the students participating in the study had successfully completed their programs. This exceeded the graduation rates of students entering the university as transfers from the community colleges, a path followed by our study participants (California State University, 2010).

Promoting Better Practice

A growing body of evidence suggests that longer student teaching experiences, especially when coupled with concurrent theoretical coursework, are associated with teachers' increased ability to apply learning to practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Whitebook et al., 2009b).

Yet participation in a formal, supervised practicum or student teaching placement, although routine

in K-12 teacher preparation, is often not required for ECE practitioners or even possible because it conflicts with work schedules.

Recognizing the importance of such learning experiences for ECE practitioners, each of B.A. cohort programs was urged by program funders to explore creative ways to overcome the challenges of arranging a practicum for those employed full time. Many offered students the option of an on-site practicum. While it is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the quality of these experiences, we were able to tap students' assessments about the trade offs involved in allowing them to complete their experiences at their place of employment versus in another site in the community and the guidance and supervision they received as part of their field experience.

Students who participated in an onsite practicum found it to be more convenient than did those who left their workplaces for their field placement, but many whose practicum was on site expressed a desire, if convenience was not an issue, to participate in one conducted offsite. Additionally, those supervised by staff at the practicum site were notably less satisfied than those supervised by an independent coach or mentor. Graduates also pointed to the need for more dedicated time for reflection with field supervisors, particularly those who were college faculty or working on site.

These two findings point to the importance of structuring field placements so that students are safe to try new things or make mistakes, risks that are less likely if the practicum is distinct from one's job and/or not considered in one's performance review. They also suggest that more resources are likely needed to train those providing guidance and to allow supervisors and students to spend more dedicated time reflecting on the field experience. Although we do not have information about the backgrounds of those providing feedback to students during their practicum, there is increasing evidence that the quality of mentoring and practica experiences rests in large measure with the preparation and skills of field supervisors or mentors, the dosage of support they can offer, and the clarity of their roles (Whitebook et al., 2009a).

In addition to providing an opportunity for practice, the content of higher education programs also influences student learning and effectiveness. Yet, too often, the discussion of effective teacher preparation

in ECE has focused narrowly on the quantity of formal education, overlooking how the quality of the higher education experience contributes to the degree to which graduates are able to demonstrate and articulate professional competencies. One area of pressing concern is the extent to which higher education programs are addressing the needs of young children who are dual language learners, an ever increasing proportion of the population in California and other states.

In Year 3 we asked students about the number of languages spoken by the children in their classrooms, family child care homes, or centers if they were site supervisor or directors. Strikingly, more than two-thirds (68 percent) reporting three or more languages spoken by children in these settings, with the remainder typically dealing with at least two languages. Although most participants did not report difficulty communicating with the children because of language barriers, those who did typically worked with multiples language groups. This finding underscores the need for helping ECE practitioners build strategies for multiple configurations of linguistic background among children. The majority of the students reported their B.A. cohort program had provided them with information and support for addressing the needs of dual language learners, but there was considerable variation, with some programs rated as much more helpful than others. This suggests that college instructors themselves may be in need of professional development in order to ensure their programs adequately address the critical issues their students face on the job.

Support for Ongoing Adult Learning

Too often it is assumed that once early childhood practitioners complete their degrees, they have no further need for professional development experiences. Thus, it was troubling to learn that less than a third of the study participants had access to a mentor or coach or other consultants with whom they could continue to reflect upon their own development, and approximately a third of participants were not satisfied with the amount of time they had on the job to reflect about their practice. This situation is in stark contrast to the routine supports for K-12 teachers upon completing their education which include induction, ongoing mentoring, paid preparation time, and paid staff development days (Whitebook et al.,

2009b). In early care and education, too often, mentoring or onsite training and formal education are posed as alternatives to one another, rather than seen as complementary ingredients for developing effective practitioners.

Retaining B.A.-level Professionals in the ECE Field

Degree completion notwithstanding, those working in the early care and education field often fail to receive better compensation for their investment in education and training. As a result, many skilled and dedicated practitioners seek higher-paying positions and often leave direct work with children and families or the field altogether. A recent study of the workforce in early childhood infrastructure organizations in California, such as resource and referral agencies, reported that half of the infrastructure organization staff had experience working directly with young children in center- or home-based early care and education settings. Most of these staff were college graduates, and many were women of color. The major reason they cited for leaving the classroom was the desire for better pay (Whitebook, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2010).

Thus, another major question of this evaluation revolves around the career trajectories of participants once they complete their degrees, making the retention rates of B.A.-level practitioners another important outcome measure of interest to program developers and policy makers. Shortly after graduation, a number of the study participants reported promotions and pay increases. Among the nearly one in five participants reporting a new position, some assumed greater responsibility, such as moving from teacher to lead or head teacher, or assistant teacher to teacher.

Others moved from the classroom to an administrative or coordinating role. It is too soon to identify any patterns, but we will be tracking the extent to which this expanded pool of B.A.-level professionals remains in teaching and caregiving roles, moves to administrative or support functions, or leaves the field in subsequent years.

To a large extent, the career trajectories of these graduates will depend on the financial reward that accompanies their educational accomplishments. Teachers and assistants who returned to school to meet the degree requirements for the New Jersey Abbott Preschool Program could expect a salary comparable to public school K-12 teachers (although not necessarily with the same benefits) in addition to financial and other supports for their education (Lobman, Ryan, & McLaughlin, 2005). Graduates in our sample, even those in Head Start, have no such guarantee. More than one-third of the graduates reported receiving a raise averaging about \$4,600 a year shortly after completing their B.A. degree. It remains to be seen, however, if these increases were directly related to degree completion or to other reasons such as a cost of living adjustment, whether the level of increase will be sufficient to stem the exodus from current workplaces or the field, and if increased reward awaits all the graduates. These issues will be explored in Year 4 of Learning Together.

Graduates' career trajectories and compensation, of course, are not immune from other economic and policy developments. Early childhood programs have been hit hard by the increase in unemployment since 2008 and by recent severe cuts to publically funded child care, causing many programs to eliminate jobs or close their doors.

This third phase of our multi-year investigation of B.A. completion cohort programs for working students has strengthened our previous findings about the potential of such programs to produce a diverse cadre of well-educated teachers and leaders in early care and education. As other states and communities consider large-scale approaches to effective preparation of ECE teachers, the six programs under study can serve as a model for the entire profession. As the study team continues to investigate the career trajectories and work environments of the participants and to tap institutional experience and change at these colleges and universities, we hope to offer a continually deeper and more nuanced understanding of the multiple ingredients of content and quality of formal education, support for ongoing learning, and financial reward that must be considered in designing policies to build an effective ECE workforce.

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Appendix 1: Study Design

Year 3 Survey Universe and Survey Sample

In the fall 2009, the First 5 commissions of San Francisco, Santa Barbara and Alameda Counties, and the WestEd-E3 Institute in Santa Clara County, provided the study team with an updated contact list of students who were enrolled in each of the six B.A. completion cohort programs, and if available, an updated contact list of students who had graduated.

During the course of Year 3, we attempted two telephone interviews with the 110 eligible students, defined as those who were currently enrolled in one of the cohort programs, were on non-medical leave but still enrolled, or had graduated. We did not attempt interviews with any students who had left their cohort program before graduating or who were on medical leave.

The Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of California at Berkeley approved the survey instruments and data collection procedures for this study. After securing updated lists of students and graduates, as described above, in fall 2009, we sent a letter to all the students describing the study, encouraging their participation, and informing them about their rights as research subjects.

A separate grant from the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation, allowed the research team to expand the data collection process for the students in the SJSU and CSU-East Bay cohorts by adding classroom observations to the student interviews. Although the same interview questions were asked of participants in all the cohorts, our data collection processes differed for these two cohorts and thus, we describe the data collection process separately for CSU-East Bay and SJSU. A separate report, to be released in early 2011, will report on the findings from the classroom observations. This current report focuses on findings from the graduate interviews.

Mills College, San Francisco State University, Antioch University and the University of La Verne

We attempted two telephone interviews, an update interview and a graduate interview, with the students in four of the six cohorts: Mills College, San Francisco State University, Antioch University and the University of La Verne.

The purpose of the update interview (averaging five minutes) was to gather updated contact and employment information from each student/graduate. The graduate interview was more in-depth, averaging 35 minutes. The interviews focused on the graduates' employment, including their perception of the adult learning environment at their workplace, changes in employment since graduation, and their perspectives on their educational experience, focusing on their practicum experiences, the extent to which their educational programs assisted them in working with linguistically diverse children, and their assessment of the impact of their cohort program on their careers in the early childhood field. (See the Data Overview section for more details.)

The order of the interviews depended upon the students' graduation status. The students, who had not yet graduated in the fall 2009, participated in the update interview in the fall 2009 and the graduate interview in the spring 2010. The students, who had graduated by the fall 2009, received the graduate interview in the fall 2009 and the update interview in the spring 2010. Those students who had not graduated by spring 2010 received two update interviews.

Our research team was available to conduct the interviews during daytime, evening, and weekend hours. We either conducted the interview at the time of the first call to the student/graduate, or scheduled the interview for a time that was more convenient for them. We made eight attempts to interview each student/graduate.

Overall, 91% of the students who had graduated from the four cohort programs completed the graduate interview. More than three-quarters (79 percent) of the students completed the update interview. (See Table A2-1.) Of the 15 students who did not complete an update interview, eight had completed a graduate interview. Only seven students (10 percent) did not complete any interview during Year 3.

Table A1 - 1. Year 3 Completion and Response Rates for Four of the Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	Total students	Eligible for graduate interview	Completed graduate interview	Graduate interview response rate	Eligible for update interview	Completed update interview	Update interview response rate
Mills College	6	4	4	100%	6	6	100%
San Francisco State University	32	30	26	87%	32	22	69%
Antioch University	22	21	20	95%	22	20	91%
University of La Verne	12	12	11	92%	12	9	75%
Total	72	67	61	91%	72	57	79%

San Jose State University and California State University East Bay

The CSU-East Bay students had all graduated by the fall of 2009. In the fall 2009, we attempted graduate interviews with all the students and classroom observations for the students who worked directly with children in a center-based classroom or a family child care home. Eighty two percent of the graduates completed the graduate interview. (See Table A2-2.)

As the students at San Jose State University did not graduate until May 2010, we attempted update interviews with the students in both the fall 2009 and the spring 2010. In addition, in the spring 2010, we attempted classroom observations for the students who worked directly with children in a center-based classroom or a family child care home. We conducted the graduate interview with the SJSU students in the summer of 2010. As displayed in Table 4, all the SJSU students participated in the fall update interview, 72 percent participated in the spring update interview, and 88 percent participated in the summer graduate interview.

Data Overview

As in Years 1 and 2, in addition to the two telephone surveys, information from the cohort program data bases informs this report. The databases are maintained by the agencies funding the cohort programs, specifically the local First 5 commissions and the WestEd-E3 Institute. These databases include basic contact, demographic, and employment information about the students and were provided to the research team at the beginning of the study, in fall 2007. The purpose of the update interview was to re-establish our relationships with the students and to update their contact and employment information. The graduate interview included both open- and closed-ended questions focusing on:

Employment

- Current employment: type of setting; ages and characteristics of the children served; wages; full- or part-time employment
- Changes in employment since graduation: new workplace; new job title; increased wages; better benefits
- Perception of the adult learning environment at the workplace: supervision; professional development plans; ability to observe other classrooms; orientation for new teachers; professional activities; availability of coaches/mentor; on-site workshops; time for reflection

Table A1-2. Survey Completion and Response Rates for the San Jose State University and CSU-East Bay B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	Eligible for update interview	Completed Fall 2009 update interview	Fall 2009 response rate	Completed spring 2010 update interview	Spring 2010 response rate	Eligible for graduate interview	Completed graduate interview	Graduate interview response rate
SJSU	27	27	100%	21	78%	25	22	88%
CSU-EB						11	9	82%

Education

- Educational goals
- Reflections on the B.A. completion cohort program: three important things learned; additional classes that would have been helpful; advice you would give to new student; skills learned to work with English Language Learners
- The practicum experience: location of practicum site; instruction and guidance; impact of the practicum experience

The sample sizes (“N”) reported in the following tables and charts are based on the graduate interviews. Our discussion focuses on the sample as a whole, and notes variations among the cohorts. These variations have not been tested for statistical significance because of the small number of students within each cohort; however, we did test for statistical significance for selected variables for the full sample. We provide

commentary on differences when appropriate, but we caution readers to be aware of the small sample sizes of individual cohorts.

Data Analysis

Data coding and analysis were completed in several steps. First, closed-ended questions were coded based on students’ responses, and coded data were entered into an Excel data file. Data from 10 percent of all interviews was entered into the computer twice to check the accuracy of our data entry procedures. Next, using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 14.0), we computed frequencies of all closed-ended questions for each individual cohort and for the entire sample. The final step involved performing inferential statistical tests (e.g., chi-square analyses) to examine trends in the data. All significant results are reported at a *p* value of .05 or better.

Appendix 2:

Individual Cohort Tables

Table A2-1. Ethnicity, Gender and Age of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	CSU- East Bay	Mills College	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All cohorts
Ethnicity							
Latino/Hispanic	33%	25%	65%	73%	65%	14%	49%
White, non-Hispanic	56%	25%	15%	18%	4%	45%	24%
African American	11%	25%	0%	0%	19%	14%	11%
Asian American	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	18%	6%
Multi	0%	25%	20%	9%	4%	9%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	9	4	20	11	26	22	92
Gender							
Female	100%	100%	95%	100%	89%	95%	95%
Male	0%	0%	5%	0%	12%	5%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	101%	100%	100%
N	9	4	20	11	26	22	92
Age (Years)							
Youngest	43	32	25	27	32	27	25
Oldest	62	53	60	60	58	62	62
Mean	53	45	38	40	47	46	44
N	9	4	20	11	26	22	92

Please note very small sample sizes.

Table A2-2. Language Capacity of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	CSU East Bay	Mills College	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All Cohorts
Primary language(s) spoken at home							
English only	78%	100%	75%	55%	31%	82%	63%
English and Spanish	11%	0%	5%	9%	4%	0%	4%
Spanish only	11%	0%	20%	36%	54%	4%	26%
English and other	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	1%
Other language only	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%	14%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%
N	9	4	20	11	26	22	92
Language fluency when working with children and families							
English only	78%	75%	30%	18%	23%	55%	39%
English and Spanish	22%	25%	70%	82%	65%	36%	55%
English and other	0%	0%	0%	0%	12%	9%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%
N	9	4	20	11	26	22	92

Please note very small sample sizes.

Table A2-3. Household Status of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	CSU-East Bay	Mills College	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All cohorts
<i>Relationship status</i>							
Single	22%	50%	25%	27%	28%	9%	23%
Married/living with partner	67%	50%	60%	73%	52%	77%	64%
Divorced/separated/widowed	11%	0%	15%	0%	20%	14%	13%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	9	4	20	11	25	22	91
<i>Children living at home</i>							
At least one child under 5 years living at home	0%	25%	42%	27%	8%	9%	18%
At least one child under 19 years living at home	44%	50%	79%	64%	48%	36%	53%
At least one adult child living at home	78%	50%	21%	27%	52%	41%	42%
N	9	4	19	11	25	22	90
<i>Other adults in household</i>							
At least one other adult contributes to household income	78%	50%	65%	91%	56%	68%	67%
N	9	4	20	11	25	22	91
<i>Household income</i>							
Less than \$30,000	0%	50%	11%	0%	14%	11%	11%
\$30,000 to \$49,999	0%	0%	37%	27%	46%	6%	26%
\$50,000 to \$85,000	57%	0%	42%	46%	36%	44%	41%
More than \$85,000	43%	50%	10%	27%	5%	39%	22%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	7	4	19	11	22	18	81

Please note very small sample sizes.

Table A2-4. Employment Status of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	CSU-East Bay	Mills College	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All cohorts
Place of employment							
Licensed child care center	89%	100%	85%	91%	84%	68%	82%
Licensed family child care home	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	18%	7%
Other	11%	0%	15%	9%	8%	14%	11%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	9	4	20	11	25	22	91
Job title/position Center based only							
Assistant teacher	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	3%
Teacher/lead teacher	50%	0%	44%	60%	55%	20%	42%
Head/master teacher	25%	50%	6%	10%	10%	13%	14%
Site supervisor/assistant director/director	13%	50%	38%	30%	20%	33%	29%
Teacher/site supervisor or director/ED	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	20%	5%
Other	12%	0%	6%	0%	5%	13%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%
N	8	4	16	10	20	15	73
Ages of children served							
Under 2 years	25%	33%	13%	11%	15%	18%	16%
2 years	13%	67%	31%	22%	20%	47%	30%
3 years	13%	33%	56%	56%	80%	71%	60%
4 years to kindergarten	50%	67%	69%	89%	85%	82%	77%
School age	25%	0%	0%	11%	20%	41%	19%
One age group only	87%	33%	50%	33%	15%	24%	36%
Mixed age groups	13%	67%	50%	67%	85%	76%	64%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	8	3	16	9	20	17	73

Table A2-5. Mean Percentage of Children by Ethnicity Served by Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	CSU- East Bay	Mills College	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All cohorts
Latino/ Hispanic	35%	10%	83%	70%	38%	13%	45%
White, non- Hispanic	17%	44%	10%	11%	21%	32%	20%
African American	14%	28%	3%	1%	14%	5%	9%
Asian American/ Pacific Islander	18%	9%	2%	1%	18%	32%	15%
Multi/other	16%	9%	2%	17%	9%	18%	11%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N (Graduates)	7	3	15	7	18	14	64

Please note very small sample sizes.

Table A2-6. Tenure of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	CSU - East Bay	Mills College	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All cohorts
Tenure in current work place							
Average number of years in current work place	10	5	8	8	7	10	8
Less than two years	0%	50%	10%	9%	24%	5%	14%
Two to five years	33%	25%	30%	45%	24%	32%	31%
More than five years	67%	25%	60%	46%	52%	63%	56%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	101%
N	9	4	20	11	25	19	88
Tenure in current position							
Average number of years in current position	7	4	4	8	5	8	6
Less than two years	11%	75%	20%	18%	30%	12%	23%
Two to five years	45%	0%	55%	36%	31%	44%	40%
More than five years	44%	25%	25%	46%	39%	44%	37%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	9	4	20	11	23	16	83

Please note very small sample sizes.

Table A2-7. Practicum Experience of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs:
Impact on Practice at Work

	Percentage of students who strongly or somewhat agree						
	CSU-East Bay	Mills College	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All cohorts
The practicum helped me develop the knowledge and skills I learned in my classes.	100%	100%	90%	83%	93%	73%	88%
N	11	3	20	12	28	22	96
As a result of my practicum, I							
the ways I work with children at my job.	100%	100%	90%	67%	92%	77%	86%
N	11	3	20	12	26	22	94
Overall, my practicum has helped me do a better job at my workplace.	100%	100%	90%	67%	100%	86%	90%
N	11	3	20	12	28	21	95

Please note very small sample sizes.

Table A2-8. Practicum Placement and Supervision of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs

	CSU-East Bay	Mills College	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All cohorts
Placement - Teachers							
Own classroom	90%	0%	75%	0%	88%	61%	65%
Different classroom own workplace	10%	0%	50%	0%	0%	22%	17%
Different workplace	0%	100%	42%	100%	13%	17%	30%
N	10	2	12	8	16	23	71
Totals might exceed 100% because some students had more than one practicum placement.							
Placement - Site supervisors, assistant directors, directors, teacher directors							
Own workplace	Not reported	Not reported	75%	25%	100%	50%	71%
Different workplace	Not reported	Not reported	63%	75%	17%	50%	46%
N	1	1	8	4	6	4	24
Totals might exceed 100% because some students had more than one practicum placement.							
Supervision and guidance							
Faculty/Instructor	91%	100%	80%	100%	91%	96%	92%
Staff at practicum site	46%	67%	90%	92%	32%	93%	72%
Mentor/Coach	100%	0%	0%	17%	5%	7%	17%
N	11	3	20	12	22	28	96
Totals might exceed 100% because some students had more than one supervisor.							

Table A2-9. Practicum Experience of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs:
Placement in Another Workplace

	Percentage of students who strongly or somewhat agree			
	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	*All cohorts
The practicum site was a good match for me	100%	64%	100%	86%
N	9	11	5	29
I preferred doing my practicum at a site that was not my workplace	89%	73%	80%	79%
N	9	11	5	29
Participating in the practicum created additional scheduling problems with work	67%	73%	20%	64%
N	9	11	5	28
Participating in the practicum made it more difficult to balance family life	67%	73%	60%	67%
N	9	11	5	30
While participating in the practicum, I lost income from my child care job	11%	36%	40%	32%
N	9	11	5	28

None of the CSU-EB students participated in a practicum outside their workplace.

**Data for the Mills College and SJSU students not displayed because of very small sample sizes, however, 'all cohorts' includes the Mills College and SJSU students.*

Please note very small sample sizes.

Table A2-10. Practicum Experience of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs:
Placement in Students' Classroom/Workplace

	Percentage of students who strongly or somewhat agree				
	CSU- East Bay	Antioch University	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All cohorts
Assuming there would be no scheduling conflicts with work of family, I would have preferred to do my practicum somewhere other than my own classroom	11%	57%	69%	57%	51%
N	9	7	13	14	43
Assuming there would be no scheduling conflicts with work of family, I would have preferred to do my practicum somewhere other than my own worksite	Not reported	67%	67%	67%	65%
N	1	9	6	3	20

*None of the Mills students were placed in their own classroom/workplace.
LaVerne students did not reply to this question.*

Please note very small sample sizes.

Table A2-11. Table A2-11. Practicum Experience of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs: Guidance and Supervision

	Percentage of students who strongly or somewhat agree						
	CSU-East Bay	Mills College	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All cohorts
My instructor/faculty provided the guidance I needed during the practicum	100%	100%	94%	92%	85%	75%	88%
N	10	3	16	12	27	20	88
My supervisor at the practicum site provided the guidance I needed during the practicum	80%	Not reported	94%	82%	88%	100%	90%
N	5	2	18	11	26	6	68
My coach/mentor provided the guidance I needed during the practicum	100%	N/A	N/A	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	100%
N	11	0	0	2	2	1	16

Please note very small sample sizes.

Table A2-12. Practicum Experience of Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs: Reflection

	Percentage of students who strongly or somewhat agree						
	CSU-East Bay	Mills College	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All cohorts
Overall, I had enough opportunities to reflect upon my practicum with my faculty/instructor	100%	100%	94%	100%	88%	70%	89%
N	10	3	16	12	26	20	87
Overall, I had enough opportunities to reflect upon my practicum with the supervisor at my practicum site	80%	Not reported	89%	73%	88%	100%	87%
N	5	2	18	11	25	6	67
Overall, I had enough opportunities to reflect upon my practicum with my mentor/coach	100%	N/A	N/A	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	100%
N	11	0	0	2	2	1	16

Please note very small sample sizes.

Table A2-13. Workplace Supports for Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs Working in Center-Based Programs

	CSU- East Bay	Mills College	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All cohorts
Written plan for professional development	88%	50%	63%	80%	68%	40%	64%
N	8	4	16	10	19	15	72
Types of support for professional development plan							
Encouragement only	29%	0%	22%	0%	23%	17%	18%
Financial assistance and/or time off	14%	100%	33%	14%	23%	33%	27%
Encouragement and financial assistance/time off	57%	0%	44%	86%	54%	50%	55%
Total	100%	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	7	2	9	7	13	6	44
Professional development activities							
Taught classes at center	22%	75%	45%	20%	38%	44%	39%
Taught classes in community	22%	50%	15%	20%	24%	38%	25%
Served as mentor or coach	56%	75%	75%	80%	81%	81%	76%
Written articles	0%	0%	5%	0%	10%	0%	4%
Participated in research	33%	0%	30%	20%	10%	13%	19%
N	9	4	20	10	21	16	80
Formal observations							
at own center	33%	0%	71%	0%	54%	33%	42%
N	6	2	7	4	13	6	38
at other centers	17%	0%	29%	50%	21%	17%	24%
N	6	2	7	6	14	6	41

Table continued on next page.

Table A2-13. Workplace Supports for Graduates of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs Working in Center-Based Programs

continued from previous page

	CSU-East Bay	Mills College	Antioch University	University of La Verne	San Francisco State University	San Jose State University	All cohorts
Plan to orient incoming staff	38%	50%	83%	80%	53%	79%	67%
N	8	4	17	10	17	14	70
Type of plan							
Orientation/training	67%	100%	93%	88%	56%	73%	79%
Work with mentor/buddy/shadow staff	67%	50%	43%	38%	78%	27%	47%
N	3	2	14	8	9	11	47
Works regularly with							
Coach	0%	0%	11%	0%	14%	6%	8%
Mentor	0%	75%	11%	20%	10%	38%	19%
Mental health consultant	22%	25%	26%	10%	57%	13%	29%
Curriculum specialist	11%	25%	21%	0%	19%	25%	18%
N	9	4	19	10	21	16	79
Feedback							
Formal evaluation:							
Less than once/year	0%	0%	0%	29%	0%	0%	5%
Once/year	33%	100%	86%	57%	54%	60%	60%
More than once/year	67%	0%	14%	14%	46%	40%	35%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	6	2	7	7	13	5	40
Informal feedback							
Daily	0%	0%	14%	14%	15%	0%	10%
Once/week	0%	0%	0%	29%	15%	17%	12%
Once every two weeks	50%	0%	43%	0%	15%	33%	24%
Once/month	33%	50%	43%	29%	31%	50%	37%
Less than once/month	17%	0%	0%	29%	8%	0%	10%
Only as needed	0%	50%	0%	0%	15%	0%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	101%	99%	100%	100%
N	6	2	7	7	13	6	41
Satisfied with amount of time to reflect	56%	50%	58%	73%	57%	75%	63%
N	9	4	19	11	21	16	80

Please note very small sample sizes.